



Muscogee Nation News

Mvskoke Media production The official tribal newspaper of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Elementary School Challenge Bowl wraps competition for 2015

47 elementary teams narrow to one winner

Amanda Rutland/Media Specialist

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The 16th Annual Muscogee (Creek) Nation Elementary School Challenge Bowl Competition was held as the last division of the tournament Feb. 20 at the College of the Muscogee Nation in Okmulgee.

Forty-seven teams of third through fifth grade students squared off to find out who was the most knowledgeable about Mvskokvlke.

One thing that lingered in the mind of CB match judge and score keeper Nathan Barnett was the sportsmanship of the competitors.

“I have seen a few teams get up and not only wait to be recognized, but go over to the other team and congratulate them and thank them for having a good match,” Barnett said. “Also, coming by and thanking us and shaking our hand as well.”

First time participate Kaya



MNN/Amanda Rutland

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Elementary School Challenge Bowl Competition volunteer Jim Thomas updates the CB bracket as the competition progressed Feb. 20, at the College of the Muscogee Nation in Okmulgee, Okla.

Arden from the Checotah Sooner Native team, experienced a few surprises during the competition.

“I think it is pretty cool because this is my first time doing it and I am surprised that they would actually provide the food for us,” Arden said. “I had a corn dog, some potato chips and a Gatorade and a granola bar.”

Checotah sponsor Annette

Hicks said the team picked the name because they are Sooner football fans and also Native American.

Teams Beggs Hvtke and Glenpool Black entered the 11th round semifinals. Glenpool Black advanced to the finals to face Glenpool Blue where Blue prevailed over Black 110-100.

Beggs Hvtke placed third and

also received the Wilburn Gouge Honors Team Award.

Barnett commented on his experience as a volunteer.

“The hardest part is having to tell them incorrect; you know, because they try so hard,” Barnett said. “It is always good to see them out and learning about the culture through this way of match and challenge.”

CMN launches health and wellness services

Students to benefit from on-campus assistance

Amanda Rutland/Media Specialist

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The College of the Muscogee Nation announced the college’s new Health and Wellness Services Feb. 18, during the kick off event at the CMN Student Center in Okmulgee.

HWS is a collaboration between CMN and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health Behavioral Health Services to advocate wellness education, healthy lifestyles and stress management.

“[It is] designed to promote awareness for substance abuse, mental health and an added component is the sexually transmitted infections,” CMN Dean of Student Affairs Monte Randall said.

HWS was made possible by a Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration multi-year grant for minority serving



MNN/Amanda Rutland

Students gather Feb. 18, at the College of the Muscogee Nation Student Center in Okmulgee, Okla., for the CMN Health and Wellness Kick Off Event to learn about the programs offered through the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health.

intuitions. CMN was one of three tribal colleges nationwide to receive this grant.

During the kick off event, MCNDH Secretary of Health Lt. Cmdr. Seneca Smith and BHS Manager Tamara Newcomb spoke to students about the services available

within MCNDH.

“We just recently collaborated with a grant through the college so we can get our services more out there; and so that everyone is more aware of what we offer and what health services are offered with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation,” Smith said.

HWS staff consists of Case Manager Elise Brown and Administrative Assistant Candise Noon.

“What I do is help students locate resources for whatever needs they have, whether it is

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March 15, 2015

Vol. 45, Issue 6

“Tasahcuce”
Little Spring



Over \$163k approved for MFSI during Council session

Additional forensic audit funding postponed until next session

Jessica McBride/Editorial Assistant

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a regular session March 3 at the MCN Mound Building in Okmulgee.

The Council addressed the following legislation:

- NCA 15-016 Authorizing a supplemental appropriation to the MCN Headstart Program fiscal year 2015 budget; which was returned as a veto on Feb. 13. The Council voted 16-0 to allow the veto to stand.
- TR 15-019 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a memorandum of agreement between the Nation and the Indian Health Service for the employment of April Haddock as commissioned personnel at the Sapulpa Indian Health Center. Rep. Dode Barnett sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0.
- TR 15-020 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a facility services contract between MCN and the McAlester Regional Health Center for the purpose of providing inpatient and outpatient care to eligible Native American patients referred by medical providers of MCN. Barnett sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0.
- TR 15-021 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a memorandum of understanding on behalf of the MCN Department of Health with Medco Health Solutions Inc. and Express Scripts Inc. Barnett sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0.
- TR 15-022 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a physician participation agree-

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MUSCOGEE NATION NEWS

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Tulsa Indian Arts Festival kicks off artistic year



MNN/Gary Fife
Mvskoke flute player/maker Nelson Harjo fine-tunes a flute for sale to attendees of the Greater Tulsa Indian Arts Festival held Feb. 13-15 at the Glenpool Conference Center in Glenpool, Okla.

Inter-tribal show launches Indian arts circuit

Gary Fife/Radio Specialist

TULSA, Okla. — The 2015 Indian arts circuit has begun through the Greater Tulsa Indian Arts Festival. Held Feb. 13-15, at the Glenpool Conference Center, the 2015 event was a combination of: arts market, storytelling and musical performances, American Indian food, a student art competition and other cultural activities.

Gwen Red Corn

Gwen Red Corn (Osage/Seneca) is the volunteer coordinator for the show and has been a part of the festival for nine years. Red Corn explained that one of the prime purposes of the annual show is to find funds for arts education, along with their regular arts competition. “This is to continue their ventures in being young artists and

being able to receive their education and further their careers,” Red Corn said. “We do have a juried art contest with local Native American students. We also have the artists themselves—the vendors who have booths in the event are also judged.”

The Tulsa festival is important to Native artists, both locally and across the country. Red Corn said that holding this event in the early part of the year is designed to make it the jumping off point for the year’s lineup of shows and competitions. “They like to make it to Glenpool, Oklahoma first. Then they start out with the spring and summer commitments that they’ve already made,” Red Corn said. “So, that’s why we feel privileged that they stop here with us for three days and start their year off with us.”

The economic return of art sales is critical to the show and to the artists themselves. “It’s vital that they kick off the year very well to substanti-

Shelter to help keep dogs off Eufaula streets



MNN/Darren DeLaune
Outgoing City of Eufaula Mayor and current Muscogee (Creek) Nation Public Relations Manager Selina Jayne Dornan poses with puppy Maggie May during a dedication ceremony Feb. 20 for Hope Haven Animal Rescue, a new no kill animal shelter in Eufaula, Okla.

Dornan shows love of animals through act as outgoing mayor

Darren DeLaune/MNN Reporter

EUFAULA, Okla. — Current Muscogee (Creek) Nation Public Relations Manager and outgoing mayor of the city of Eufaula Selina Jayne Dornan has always been an animal lover.

“Ever since I was young, I have always had animals,” Jayne Dornan said.

So for her last duty as mayor of Eufaula, Jayne Dornan wanted to finish something she started shortly after she took office in 2011.

What started out as a group of volunteers, has turned into what is now called a no-kill shelter that will take the stray dogs off the street and give them somewhere to stay.

“At one time, we were housed

in an old building in the dump grounds,” Jayne Dornan said. “We had makeshift pens for the dogs but it was very hot in that metal building for the animals and volunteers who took care of them.”

Through grants and donations, they were able to get a shelter that is suitable to house stray dogs until they are adopted or are placed in a foster home.

“This new shelter will be like going from nothing to the penthouse,” President of Hope Haven Animal Rescue Glen Creekmore said. “This new shelter will give us the kennels we need for the dogs. We will be going from having six kennels up to 20.”

There is also a plan should there be an overflow.

“We have an area outside that we are going to be using and making extra kennels in case of overflow,” Jayne Dornan said. “We will have those kennels to use plus the foster families. Also, worst case scenario, some volunteers do take some dogs home to care for them and the shelters in Checotah help us out as well.”

According to Jayne Dornan, in the six years before she took office, she tallied that the city of Eufaula had euthanized over 1,000 dogs.

Stray animals are an issue in most communities. In Eufaula, there was not a suitable place to house the animals so the city had no choice but to euthanize them.

The city ordinance was that if the dog was not adopted or claimed within three days, it was to be euthanized. Jayne Dornan had that changed to 10 days.

“That was for certain situations if the family lost their dog and it was in our shelter,” Jayne

ate what they need for the rest of the year,” Red Corn said.

Merlin Little Thunder

Southern Cheyenne citizen Merlin Little Thunder is one of the painters participating in the Tulsa show. For him, it is a matter of financial support and enjoying a shared profession with other artists.

“It’s a big part of my life,” Little Thunder said. “We do our best to try and share it and make sure that everybody come over here and has the opportunity to support themselves through their artistic endeavors.” He outlined which of the two were more important to him. “We always cover our expenses, we always cover our travel, but you know, most importantly; we get to be among one another; we get to share our comradery with each other. We always look forward to seeing one another at the next show,” Little Thunder said.

Traci Rabbit

Cherokee Nation citizen Traci Rabbit is the 2015 Tulsa Indian Arts Festival Premiere Artist. Rabbit works in several media, including painting, ceramics and acrylics. Her booth was filled with paintings, coffee mugs, mouse pads and other decorative items.

Her work is designed and priced to appeal to a broad array of potential buyers. “As artists, we have to pay out expenses,” Rabbit said. “You have your booth fee, your travel, your gas, your food and so, having the gift items in a variety of price ranges helps.”

A strong focus of Rabbit’s work is the role of Native American women.

“I think, as Native American women, that we are very capable of working in both worlds—the Anglo world and Native

world,” Rabbit said. “I like to do my art, show the strength and how she can weather all storms no matter what she faces and come out on the other side in a positive manner.”

Like the other artists, the Tulsa event acts as a starting point for her year.

“It’s a home show and we, as local artists; we like to support what’s going on in the Tulsa area. It is the start of the art festivals for the year,” Rabbit said.

William Harjo

Muscogee (Creek) citizen William Harjo brought his river cane and cedar flutes and other handicrafts to the Tulsa show.

For Harjo, the making and selling of his flutes was a way to regain energy lost during medical and professional challenges.

“After I started making them, somebody recommended that I take some to a powwow, maybe make gas money,” Harjo said. “I’ve been doing that ever since.”

Harjo said that the Tulsa Indian Arts Festival allows him to blend the arts and crafts discipline with more pure artistic expression.

“This here, allows me to cross the line as an arts and crafts vendor into more of an artist status by being allowed to be here,” Harjo. “As far as art, most of it is based on visual. My art is into tuning and the sound that I’m producing rather than the visual. This is what I call ‘usable art.’”

The Tulsa Indian Arts Festival serves another purpose—reminding Oklahomans that its Native cultures and people are still an important part of the community.

“I believe it educates a lot of people...we have dancers here; we have flute players here, all of our culture that we can expose to someone who is interested and respectful,” Red Corn said.

List of upcoming MNN deadlines

MNN/Media Release

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The following is a list of upcoming deadlines to submit content for the 'Muscogee Nation News.'

April 1 — March 25

April 15 — April 7

May 1 — April 23

May 15 — May 7

June 1 — May 22

June 15 — June 8

July 1 — June 22

July 15 — July 7

Aug. 1 — July 24

Aug. 15 — Aug. 7

Sept. 1 — Aug. 24

Sept. 15 — Sept. 8

Oct. 1 — Sept. 24

Oct. 15 — Oct. 7

Nov. 1 — Oct. 23

Nov. 15 — Nov. 6

Dec. 1 — Nov. 20

Dec. 15 — Dec. 7

CORRECTION

In the March 1 edition of the 'Muscogee Nation News,' the media release titled, 'Council releases statement on forensic audit' contained an incorrect credit line. It should read 'National Council/Media Release.'

The MNN regrets this error.
— Sterling Cosper/Editor

Adult Literacy Program returns to Okmulgee



MNN/Amanda Rutland
The Okmulgee Public Library is offering confidential adult literacy tutoring.

Free literacy education available for community

Amanda Rutland/Media Specialist

OKMULGEE, Okla. — Problems with adult literacy is not an issue often publically addressed in this day and age. However, the Oklahoma Department of Libraries website states that in Okmulgee County, 17 percent of people over the age of 18 do not have a high school diploma. Okmulgee Public Library Director Kristin Cunningham has seen firsthand the struggle of adults without literacy skills. “Their reading level is lacking to where they’re not able to get jobs and become productive citizens because they can’t fill out job applications. They don’t know how to use a computer,”

Cunningham said. Because a number of volunteers have stepped forward to help, the OPL is now able to offer adult literacy classes. According to Cunningham, the library used to offer similar programs several years ago. It had been a goal of OPL to bring the Adult Literacy Program back, but they needed a volunteer to facilitate it. Muscogee (Creek) citizen and ALP Director Nathan Cross became involved when he called OPL looking for volunteer opportunities and learned of the dormant ALP. “I wasn’t really interested in sorting book or anything like that. She [Cunningham] said there is this one thing. ‘I have really been looking for someone to get literacy program back going.’” Cross said.

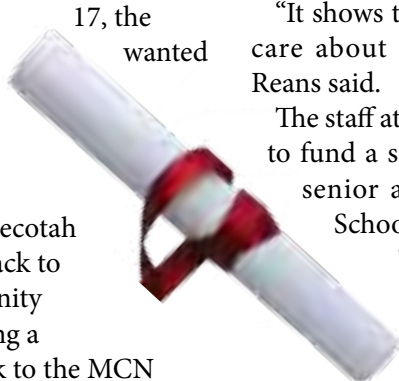
Including Cross, there are nine ODOL Literacy Council certified tutors. Upon intake, participants fill out a general intake form comprised of contact information and preferences. Then, participants are tested to determine literacy level. After testing, participants are matched with a tutor for one-on-one learning. Tutoring sessions are scheduled when the participants are available. “[Scheduling] really just depends on the tutors flexibility and the learner’s flexibility and when they are available,” Cross said. “Because some people may work or have children.” Cunningham stressed that tutoring sessions and participant information is kept confidential. “We try to keep it where, nobody knows what really is going on,” Cunningham said. According to Cross, assistance is readily available. “I’ve got several tutors that are chopping at the bits and asking me all the time, ‘When I am going to get paired with someone?’” Cross said. The literacy program is free and open to all individuals ages 17 and up. For more information, call: 918-756-1448. For information about other literacy programs, visit: www.odl.state.ok.us/lit/litprogs.asp.

Casino raises scholarship funds

Checotah gaming employees help community

Darren DeLaune/MNN Reporter

CHECOTAH, Okla. — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Checotah Casino is one of the biggest employment locations for the Checotah area, a community within the MCN jurisdiction. On Feb. 17, the casino wanted to show how much they appreciate being in Checotah by giving back to the community by presenting a \$1000 check to the MCN Higher Education Scholarship Foundation Program to fund a scholarship. The casino collected money for the scholarship by allowing employees to wear jeans to work for a day if they donated \$1. “This has been a great fundraiser,” MCN Checotah Casino CEO Kyle Reans said. “The staff loves it. The patrons love it and it helps boost employee morale.”



He said that this is not the first of such ventures. “We have done a previous fundraiser for a Relay for Life team,” Reans said. “It was successful for that team and the employees here wanted to keep that going.” According to Reans, the staff decided to do another fundraiser when the MCN HESFP approached them about their program. “It shows that our employees care about our community,” Reans said. The staff at the casino wanted to fund a scholarship for one senior at Checotah High School. “We want to give back to our community,” Reans said. “What better way to do it than by giving a scholarship to a graduating senior from Checotah?” MCN HESFP Director Dr. Peter Coser spoke about the scholarship and what it does for not only their program but to the student who it is awarded to. “It is a good feeling knowing these employees care about their community and showing it by having a fundraiser,” Coser said.

COUNCIL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ment on behalf of MCNDH with Humana Insurance Company and Humana Health Plan Inc. Barnett sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-023 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a hospital participation agreement on behalf of MCNDH with Humana Insurance Company and Humana Health Plan Inc. Barnett sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-024 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a Muskogee Civic Center room rental agreement. Barnett sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-025 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a use of school property agreement with Beggs Public Schools. Barnett sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-026 Authorizing the execution of a Federal Transit Administration fiscal year 2015 certifications and assurances. Rep. Mitch Jack sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-027 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a memorandum of agreement between MCN and IHS for satisfactory domestic water supply and adequate sewage disposal for Indian homes within MCN. Rep. Mark Randolph sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-028 Authorizing the principal chief to execute an oil and gas lease on 35 acres of tribal property located in Wagoner County. Rep. Joyce Deere sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-029 Authorizing the principal chief to execute an oil and gas lease on 160 acres of tribal property located in Creek County. Deere sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-030 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a surface damage agreement on tribal property located in Creek County. Deere sponsored the

resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-031 Authorizing the principal chief to execute a service line agreement with Public Service Company of Oklahoma for the purpose of providing and maintaining electrical service to the Koweta Food Distribution Facility. Rep. Johnnie Greene sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-032 Authorizing the executive branch to prepare and submit grant applications to the various federal and state governmental agencies and private foundations for both FY 2015 and FY 2016 and authorizing the principal chief to execute all necessary grant documents. Rep. Robert Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-033 Authorizing the Gaming Operations Authority Board to execute a standard form of agreement and guaranteed maximum price amendment with Manhattan Redstone, a joint venture for renovations to River Spirit Casino. Rep. David Hill and Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • TR 15-034 Authorizing the principal chief to submit a bid to the City of Checotah to purchase real property in McIntosh County and to purchase the real property if the bid is awarded. Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-020 Authorizing a \$866.05 special appropriation to a Muscogee (Creek) youth. Rep. Lucian Tiger and Hufft sponsored the amendment, which passed 12-3 with Rep. James Jennings, David Nichols and Darrell Proctor voting against it. • NCA 15-021 Authorizing a \$1,500 donation to the 25th annual Trail of Hope Native American Sobriety Conference. Nichols sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-022 Authorizing the expenditure of the MCN Higher Education Scholarship Fund for the MCN Higher Education Scholarship Foundation. Jennings sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-023 Authorizing a \$30,000 donation to Graham-Dustin Public School. Rep. Frank Coachman and Jack sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-024 Authorizing a \$513.03 appropriation to a Muscogee (Creek) citizen. Jack sponsored the amendment, which passed 11-4 with Jennings, Nichols, Proctor and Hill voting against it. • NCA 15-026 Authorizing MCNDH to create a \$350,000 budget line item for interest expense for the new Okemah Hospital and new Eufaula Clinic and the expenditure of MCNDH third party investment funds for interest payments related to the Okemah Hospital construction and the Eufaula Clinic joint venture project. Greene sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-027 Authorizing MCNDH to create a \$440,060 budget line item for the MCN Medical Center EMS Program and the expenditure of MCNDH third party funds for the MCNMC EMS Program. Greene sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-028 Authorizing MCNDH to create a \$692,459 budget line item for the MCNDH Orthodontics Program and the expenditure of MCNDH third party funds for the MCNMC EMS Program. Greene sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-029 Authorizing the MCNDH to create a \$834,646 budget line item for the MCNMC MRI and the expenditure of MCNDH third party funds for the purpose of funding the operation of the MCNMC MRI. Greene sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-030 Creating a Reintegration Program revolving fund account for various fundraising activities of RIP. Barnett sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-032 Authorizing MCNDH to expend \$725,000 in MCNDH third party investment funds for expenses related to the Eufaula Clinic joint venture project. Rep. Shirlene Ade sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-033 Authorizing a \$3,685 donation to the Council

of Holdenville American Indian Alumni. Ade sponsored the resolution, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-034 Authorizing a \$1,250 special appropriation to five Muscogee (Creek) youth. Tiger sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-035 Authorizing a \$1,500 special appropriation to six Muscogee (Creek) youth. Tiger sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-037 Appropriating \$445,832.50 to Grant Thornton LLP to facilitate the forensic audit. Rep. Thomas Yahola sponsored the amendment, which was postponed until the next session scheduled March 28. • NCA 15-038 Authorizing a \$2,000 donation to a political candidate. Barnett, Coachman and Hill sponsored the amendment, which passed 8-7 with Reps. Pete Beaver, Ade, Deere, Jennings, Nichols, Proctor and Tiger voting against it. • NCA 15-039 Authorizing a \$20,000 donation to the National Indian Child Welfare Association to sponsor the 33rd annual Protecting Our Children National American Indian Conference on child abuse and neglect. Ade sponsored the amendment, which passed 14-1 with Tiger voting against it. • NCA 15-041 Authorizing a \$805 special appropriation to a Muscogee (Creek) youth. Coachman sponsored the amendment, which passed 11-3 with Jennings, Nichols and Proctor voting against it and Jack abstaining. • NCA 15-042 Authorizing a \$960 special appropriation to Okfuskee Indian Community. Coachman sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-043 Authorizing a \$163,195.43 donation to assist the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative for continued operations. Proctor sponsored the amendment, which passed 13-2 with Tiger and Jennings voting against it. • NCA 15-044 Amending NCA 14-199 (A law of MCN authorizing an appropriation to fund the costs associated with the quarterly Inter-Tribal Council meeting of the Five Civilized

Tribes. Reps. Adam Jones and Greene sponsored the amendment, which failed 5-10 with Deere, Coachman, Barnett, Hill, Hufft, Jack, Jennings, Nichols, Randolph and Tiger voting against it. • NCA 15-045 Authorizing the \$120,000 expenditure of third party funds from the College of the Muscogee Nation by the MCNDH Behavioral Health Services for Hepatitis C prevention. Jennings sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-046 Authorizing MCNDH to create a \$3,036,203 budget line item for construction costs for the MCNMC emergency room and the expenditure of MCNDH third party investment funds for construction costs for the MCNMC emergency room construction. Greene sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-047 Authorizing a \$50,000 supplemental appropriation for the MCN Department of Environmental Services. Randolph sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-048 Amending MCN Code Annotated Title 15, Chapter 4, Section 4-101 entitled, ‘Purpose’ and 4-102 entitled, ‘MCN Cultural Center and Archives Department Revolving Fund.’ Randolph sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-049 Authorizing a \$120,431.50 special appropriation to the MCN Tribal Transit Program for the purchase of one 18-seat bus and one Americans with Disabilities Act compatible mini-van. Randolph sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0. • NCA 15-050 Authorizing MCNDH to create a \$176,700 budget line item for the MCNMC Emergency Medical Service and the expenditure of MCNDH operations investment funds for the purchase of an ambulance and equipment for MCNMC Emergency Medical Service. Greene sponsored the amendment, which passed 15-0.

Who represents you: Pandee Moore Ramirez



MNN/Jessica McBride
Okmulgee County District Judge Michael Claver conducts the swearing in ceremony for Okmulgee County Special District Judge Pandee Moore Ramirez who is accompanied by her husband and son.

First Muscogee (Creek) Okmulgee County judge sworn in

Jessica McBride/Editorial Assistant

OKMULGEE, Okla. — People young and old scrunched together on the courtrooms’ wooden benches Feb. 12 for the Okmulgee County Special District Judge swearing in ceremony at the Okmulgee County Courthouse.

“I’m the first Muscogee (Creek) person that’s been sworn in to any judge position for the state in this county,” Muscogee (Creek) citizen Pandee Moore Ramirez said.

The swarm of attendees and the support she has received as she stepped into the role overwhelmed Moore Ramirez.

“It’s very humbling and I’m honored to be in this position and to be in the community

Moore Ramirez worked in child support enforcement and worked very closely with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation unit. She hopes to continue this strong connection with MCN.

“We’ve got to be able to communicate with each other. I know the people out at the tribe; which is very beneficial.

“Everyday on my 3 o’clock docket I’m seeing Muscogee (Creek) warrants and things of that nature so we know how to kind of communicate back and forth and I’m hoping that will help open up some lines to make transitions and things like that easier,” she said.

As a judge for Okmulgee County, Moore Ramirez hopes to be able to keep the dockets moving at a rapid pace.

“We’ve had some kind of stagnation in some of our criminal dockets; which has created a population problem in the jail,” she said. “That has

“IT’S VERY HUMBLING AND I’M HONORED TO BE IN THIS POSITION AND TO BE IN THE COMMUNITY WHERE I WAS RAISED.”

- MUSCOGEE (CREEK) CITIZEN PANDEE MOORE RAMIREZ

where I was raised,” she said.

As the special district judge, Moore Ramirez will hear small claims cases, issue protective orders and preside over initial appearances in criminal cases.

She began her life thinking she wanted to help the community by becoming a social worker, and was inspired to go to law school and ultimately serve as a judge.

Okmulgee County District Judge Michael Claver said that Moore Ramirez stood out as a candidate when choosing the new special district judge.

“I’ve known Pandee since she was in high school and watched her grow up and mature as a young lawyer. She’s been a valuable asset in child support and she’s probably as near perfect a candidate for special judge as we could have picked,” Claver said.

Prior to becoming a judge,

somewhat come under control in the last month or so and I hope to kind of help ease that a little bit more as I get in this position and get my feet on the ground.”

She believes that the three district judges and herself will continue to communicate with each other and work as a team for the better of the community.

Moore Ramirez said that she will consider serving the public in other opportunities when the time comes.

“I think right now I want to get my feet on the ground with this position and kind of see where I am,” she said. “Obviously the future is wide open at this point. I’m happy to be here and honored to be able to serve the county in this way.”

Moore Ramirez is a member of the Bear Clan and Cussetah Tribal Town.

TERO

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Apply in person, online, or by mail to:

Muscogee (Creek) Nation
TERO (Tribal Employment Rights Office)
Loop 56 and Highway 75 (Education and Training Building)
P.O. Box 580
Okmulgee, OK 74447
918-549-2964

TERO Application Online:
<http://www.muscogeenation-nsn.gov/Pages/Tero/teroappforms.html>
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WELLNESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

behavioral health, any other outlying resources; you know, financially, those type of things,” Brown said.

According to Brown, she wants to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

“I like to teach not only the students but the community members the importance of mental health; the importance

of seeking services and keeping them,” Brown said. “There is nothing wrong with you. We just kind of need some help; you know, developing skills to get through that.”

Randall said to be looking for more programs, events and resources from HWS.

For more information contact Brown at: 918-549-2800.

MCN program utilizes ‘by youth for youth’ approach



MNN/Amanda Rutland
Oklahoma Regional Turning Point Consultant Louise Micolites presents Feb. 7 during an advisory council meeting for the newly formed Muscogee (Creek) Nation Youth Services Program.

Youth Services to map existing aid, determine gaps

Sterling Cospert/MNN Editor

OKMULGEE, Okla. — Nancy Mason, Director of the new Muscogee (Creek) Nation Youth Services Program explained what sets this service apart from others geared toward juveniles at MCN. “MNYS will be different in that young people will be involved in every step of program development,” Mason said. “We have borrowed the philosophy of ‘Nothing About Us Without Us.’” She hopes this by-youth-for-youth approach will help MCN determine how the Nation can better serve its young citizens. Mason explained that having youth involved in the initial conceptualization and further development of the program will also help them develop themselves. “Young people working alongside adults and becoming aware

that their voice is just as important, if not more so,” Mason said. This was already utilized during a program advisory meeting held Feb. 7 at the MCN Council House in Okmulgee, Okla. “Some young people developed the following overall goals for the program,” Mason said:

- **Sustain the Mvskoke way of life** “Currently, I am working on some grants focusing on culture and the arts. I would love to have some summer camps for our youth who are not into sports. “Additionally, by bringing in artists and elders to teach our youth, we are supporting not only their culture, but connections with history,” Mason said.
- **Identify gaps in services** “We recently completed a survey of the people. Overwhelmingly, they told us our youth need mentors, decision-making skills and life skills in general. “I hope to work with the lo-

cal community centers and the Summer Youth Employment Program to offer some life skill classes beginning this summer,” Mason said.

- **Promote existing health programs** “I have been a member of the Mvskoke Tribal Child Youth Coalition (an MCN Department of Health affiliate) for about three years and it has been a great place to get connected and in the long run, help the young people I work with to access services. “As director of MNYS, I am now able to be more involved in MTCYC and reach out to more agencies and individuals to connect. I also don’t want to re-create the wheel,” Mason said.
- **Connect youth to existing resources** “For example, I am partnering with Lucas Taylor and the Dog Soldiers for Christ during their March Madness event. I’ll be doing a workshop

so I will get to provide a service to youth while making people aware of our program. “...Also, the more I learn about what resources are out there, the more I can do to connect youth, families and service providers to other agencies and opportunities,” Mason said.

- **Build civic awareness**

“Voter registration. Although the majority of the youth we service will be under the age of 18, I want youth to know the importance of voting. “They can make a difference by learning about issues that are being voted on and encouraging their friends and family to get registered and vote. With this being an election year for MCN, I think this will be a good experience for the youth to see the process firsthand,” Mason said. “Leadership training. We all know young people who are amazing. You already know that they are leaders. “However, this program is taking the position that all young people can be leaders. We are going to reach out to the youth who are more reserved; that don’t ‘look’ like leaders and youth who are struggling,” Mason said.

- **Empower Mvskoke youth** “Through empowerment, I hope that they will not only create the future they want, but realize they can be advocates for their peers too,” Mason said.

- **Recruit and train youth advocates** “Getting the Youth Council started is a primary focus. I hope to have the members in place by the end of May so that the group can begin to set goals for the next year. “...Currently, the committee is only adults, but ideally this group will have two

to three representatives from the Youth Council who will serve as advisory committee members too,” Mason said.

- **Encourage positive relationships** “Ideally, I would love to see our Youth Council members go to their local communities and work with the youth and adults there to get our youth involved in the MNYS program goals on a local level,” Mason said. MCN Youth Services was created as a result of the 2014 MCN Strategic Planning Session. “At that time, the group came up with an overall goal of ‘Engaging Mvskoke youth in organized activities that will contribute to the community and tribal community; and help them enhance their interests, skills and abilities into their adulthood,’ ” Mason said. According to Mason, the program is currently working on a more definitive mission statement. Mason obtained a master’s of human relations degree from the University of Oklahoma and has worked with youth and families since 1994. Her primary focus has been in working with teenagers as they transition to adulthood. “Getting to create a program from the ground up is scary and exhilarating at the same time. “I feel like I have had some great work experiences in my life and have learned a lot about program development and working with youth so I am ready for this challenge,” Mason said. For more information about MNYS call Mason at: 918-549-2557 or email: nmason@mcn-nsn.gov. Find MNYS on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/MvskokeYouth and Instagram and Twitter: [@MvskokeYouth](https://twitter.com/MvskokeYouth).

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How to: apply for Realty Trust Services



Shutterstock image

RTS assists citizens with land issues

Amanda Rutland/Media Specialist

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Realty Trust Services Department works with citizens to solve and prevent land issues through different services.

Trust acquisitions

Trust acquisitions place land into trust. RTS will assist citizens with the necessary steps and paperwork to place land owned by individuals into trust. “Anyone can apply to put their land in trust, but right now what we are trying to do is restricted to trust acquisitions. That is to save out restricted land because of the blood quantum issue,” RTS Manager and Inter-Tribal Council Realty Program Chairperson Sonya McIntosh said. McIntosh referred to the Act of August 4, 1947, also known as the 47 Act, which dictates that if restricted land is inherited by a person whose registered

blood quantum is less than one half of any combination of the Five Tribes, the land loses restriction. For more information on the 47 Act including trust and restricted land, read previous MNN article titled ‘Law’s nuances still removing land from Indian Country’ in the Sept. 1, 2014 issue at: www.muscogeenation-nsn.gov/Pages/MNN/pdf/2014/20140901.pdf. “Once you remove the restrictions off your property, you can never, ever, ever put restrictions back on, but you can put it in trust,” McIntosh said. There are some requirements for putting land into trust:

- There must not be a mortgage or loan on the property.
- Tax payments must be current and not past due.
- The property should be able to pass an environmental inspection.

To apply, visit the RTS office at the McCombs Building on the MCN Tribal Complex in Okmulgee. Bring your citizenship card, land deed, abstract and proof of payment for taxes. McIntosh recommended that citizens apply for a homestead exemption on their property until the trust acquisition is complete.

Adverse Possession

McIntosh advises anyone who owns land to check on his or her property regularly. The 47 Act stipulates that restricted

land falls under Oklahoma state jurisdiction, and can be lost to adverse possession. Adverse possession is when someone other than the original landowner takes ownership of a property after using said land for a set amount of time. In Oklahoma, adverse possession takes 15 years. RTS offers boundary line and trespass surveys for family allotments of restricted land. “If you own surface (rights), if you inherit (an allotment); you need to go find your property. And if you don’t know, come in and we will take you,” McIntosh said.

Trust Probates

RTS also conducts trust probates for trust land. Restricted and fee land require a district court probate. When a landowner passes away, the land must go through probate, meaning that it will be legally transferred to another. If the landowner had a will deemed valid by the court, the instructions will be administered. However, if there was no will, the court will determine whom the land goes to. Usually it is the heirs of the landowner. According to McIntosh, trust probates require an administrative law judge instead of district court judge like regular probates. RTS prepares the paperwork and sends it to the administrative law judge. For more information about the services offered by RTS, call: 918-732-7702.

How to: apply for services at Food Distribution

Program helps low-income families with healthy foods

Darren DeLaune/MNN Reporter

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Food Distribution Program is a service that provides U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated foods to low-income Native American homes that qualify. According to the MCN website, the MCN FDP goal is to provide timely services to any household who is eligible while preserving their pride and dignity. To apply: **Step 1** — Gather all the information needed to save time later. Required information for first time applicants:

- Copy of Certificated Degree Indian Blood or Citizenship card from a federally recognized tribe for at least one household member
- Verification of all household income for the past 30 days
- If over 18 and unemployed — a statement from a non-relative verifying the applicant is unemployed

- Verification of residence (gas, water or electricity bill with name and physical address)
- Copies of Social Security cards for all household members

If you are reapplying for further benefits, and it has not been over three years since you last applied, FDP has all the cards on file. The following will be needed:

- Verification of all household income for the past 30 days
- If over 18 and unemployed — a statement from a non-relative verifying the applicant is unemployed
- Verification of residence (gas, water or electric bill with

name and physical address)

- Any other changes since last applied

Step 2 — Complete the application Muscogee (Creek) citizens who are interested in applying for the FDP may pick up an application by either:

- Calling FDP the Okmulgee office at: 918-549-2401 or Wetumka at: 405-452-1175.
 - By mail in Okmulgee at: 3001 N. Wood Drive Okmulgee, OK 74447 or Wetumka at: 614 Spokoke Circle Wetumka, OK 74883
 - Fax the Okmulgee office at: 918-549-2419 and the Wetumka office at: 405-452-1179
- You can mail in your application, bring it into the office or send it by fax.

The MCN FDP Okmulgee office has gone paperless so they will fill out the application for you if you apply in person. “While our Okmulgee office has gone paperless, our Wetumka office has not at the moment,” Certification Supervisor Anita Lowe said. “The application process can take approximately 30 minutes to one hour.” FDP staff usually processes the application and if approved, the applicant will get to pick up their food on the same day. If a citizen mailed or faxed in their application, it will usually take about seven working days to get a letter about approval. Notes

Due to USDA regulations, federally recognized tribal citizens who live in: Muskogee, Sand Springs, Tulsa and Broken Arrow, Okla., cannot apply with FDP due to population size. Elderly applicants ages 55 and up can be certified for the program for two years without having to reapply. All other applications will be



Mural by: Mary Howard

certified on a case-by-case basis. Those on food stamps are ineligible. There are tailgate services locations at the Koweta and Bristow Indian Community Centers where recipients who live away from the main FDP locations can go to pick up their food. Tailgate pickups are on the second full week of every month. The time for Koweta is: Tuesday, from 8:30–10:30 a.m. and Bristow is: Thursday from 8:30–10:30 a.m. A face-to-face interview is held as the final part of the process to go over the application and income guidelines. A new food distribution center in Coweta, Okla., is set to open soon. “Our projected date for us to move in to the store at Coweta is March 4,” Lowe said. The Food Distribution Store hours are from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. while office hours are from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. The store will be closed the last two days of the month for inventory. For more information about the MCN Food Distribution Center, contact Okmulgee at: 918-549-2401 or Wetumka at: 405-452-1175.

Program aims to help pregnant women stop smoking

Campaign launched to get expecting women off tobacco

Gary Fife/Radio Specialist

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has launched its version of a national campaign to prevent commercial tobacco use by pregnant women. Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health Tobacco Prevention Manager Carla Feathers, said the campaign is called ‘Baby and Me: Tobacco Free.’ “We provide four sessions of pre-natal education to help them quit smoking,” Feathers said. “After they get through with their four programs and they have their baby, they will come in once a month for the first year of their babies’ life and they can get a \$25 voucher for Pampers if they re-



main tobacco-free.” Even after decades of anti-smoking programs, Feathers said the problem still persists and Oklahoma has some of the worst statistics. “The state of Oklahoma remains in the top states for tobacco users and American Indians are at the top of that list within Oklahoma,” Feathers said. “We did a tobacco survey in 2012 and we found 46 percent of our Muscogee (Creek) women of child-bearing age were still smoking cigarettes and that’s a huge number even in Oklahoma standards.”

Feathers believes the reasons for this behavior are inherited from older societal customs. “Back in the ’40s and ’50s, it was the norm to smoke,” Feathers said. “I know my dad talks about taking smoke breaks at school. Children that grew up around smokers are 50 percent more likely to become smokers themselves.” The addiction from nicotine is stronger than some of what are considered the hardest drugs. “It’s actually more addictive than crack cocaine or heroin,” Feathers said. Even though some people may say that smoking habits come from a traditional relationship with Native people, Feathers said that is not the case. “We hear the reason of it being a traditional use but commercial tobacco isn’t a tradition to us and we have certain times and certain places where tobacco should be used and can be used and it’s not addictive and it’s not harmful,” Feathers said. For an unborn child, Feathers said that the bad health effects of the mother continuing

to smoke include: lower blood oxygen levels, which cause problems with the placenta; lower nutrients; higher heart rates and risk for miscarriages, still births, premature delivery and low birth weight. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention website lists further complications including higher risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and certain birth defects such as a cleft lip or palate. According to the 2011 Pregnancy Risk Assessment and Monitoring System (PRAMS) data from 24 states, approximately 10 percent of women reported smoking during the last three months of pregnancy. The CDC reports that the benefits of a woman quitting smoking during pregnancy can be almost immediate and both the mother and child will benefit. These include:

Your baby will get more oxygen, even after just one day of not smoking. There is less risk that your baby will be born too early. There is a better chance that your baby will come home from the hospital with you. You will be less likely to develop heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, chronic lung disease, and other smoke-related diseases. You will be more likely to live to know your grandchildren. You will have more energy and breathe more easily. Your clothes, hair, and home will smell better. Your food will taste better. You will have more money that you can spend on other things. You will feel good about what you have done for yourself and your baby. Feathers said that there are many resources available from the MCNDH to help someone to quit smoking including: medicines, nicotine replacement therapies and counseling. “It’s going to be a very non-judgmental environment. We’re there to help. We understand that this isn’t going to be easy,” Feathers said. Feathers said that all counseling sessions are kept confidential. The program may be contacted at: 918-756-6231 or you may drop by Suite 105 in the Baker building behind the MCN Medical Center (formerly Okmulgee Memorial Hospital) or email: carla-feathers@creekhealth.org.

“I need to let you know that quitting smoking is the most important thing that you can do for your health and the health of your baby,” Feathers said.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Community and Tribal Events

WILD ONION DINNER SET FOR MARCH 14

HENRYETTA, Okla. — Little Cussetah Church has set a wild onion dinner for March 14 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Dinners are \$8 for adults and \$4 for children 11 and under.

For more information or directions call Rev. David Dunson at: 918-752-7098.

MCN SPRING CELEBRATION SET FOR MARCH 17

BEGGS, Okla. — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Spring Celebration is set for March 17 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Beggs High School, 1201 W. 9th St., Beggs, OK 74421.

The event is open to youth ages two and up and questions may be directed to Natalie Barnett at: 918-224-9307.

WILD ONION DINNER SET FOR MARCH 21

TULSA, Okla. — Tulsa Indian United Methodist Church has set a wild onion dinner for March 21 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. at 1901 N. College, Tulsa, OK 74110.

Dinners are \$8 and include: wild onions, beans, hominy, frybread, a choice of ham or salt pork, tea, coffee or water and a dessert. Grape dumplings are sold separately for \$2.

WILD ONION DINNER SET FOR MARCH 21

TULSA, Okla. — Haikey Chapel, 8815 E 101 St., Tulsa OK, has set a wild onion dinner for March 21 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Dinners, which include: wild onions, brown beans, salt meat or ham, frybread and a vegetable, desert and drink are \$4 for children and \$8 for adults.

For more information call Sandra Bible at: 918-815-7973.

INDIGENOUS REVIVAL SET FOR MARCH 23-27

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The Indigenous Outreach Revival is set for 7 p.m. nightly, March 23-27 at the Mvskoke Dome building in Okmulgee.

For more information call Grover Wind at: 918-398-3393 or Fred Lowe at: 918-843-2265.

COUNTRY JAMBOREE SET FOR MARCH 28

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The Gold Wind Express performance group is holding a country jamboree show March 28 at the Okmulgee High School auditorium.

Proceeds will go toward the Okmulgee Lions Club.

For more information call Steven Baldrige at: 417-294-0466.

WILD ONION DINNER SET FOR MARCH 28

OKMULGEE, Okla. — Concharty United Methodist Church has set a wild onion dinner for March 28 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at 19040 Garfield Road, Okmulgee, OK 74447.

Adults and take out are \$10 and children 10 and under are \$6.

For more information call: 918-366-8450.

DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT SET FOR APRIL 4

SEMINOLE, Okla. — A disc golf tournament is set for 9 a.m. April 4 at Mekusukey Disc Golf Course in Seminole.

The deadline to sign up and pay the \$25 entry fee for adults and \$20 for children ages 8-13 is March 22.

For more information call Shane Phillips at: 405-584-1126.

NATIVE ART MARKET SET FOR APRIL 25

CHECOTAH, Okla. — The second annual Checotah Native Art Market is set for April 25 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Heartland Heritage Center Museum and Gallery, 116 N. Broadway, Checotah, OK 74426.

For more information call Frankie Blagg at: 918-916-9015 or Jon Tiger at: 918-850-3806.

MCN SRO schedule

Media Release

WETUMKA, Okla. — The following is the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Southern Regional Office schedule for the remainder of March.

March 17, 24, 31
Tax Commission
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Lunch 11-11:30 a.m.

For more information call: 405-452-1100.

2015 MCN Summer Youth enrollment open

MCN E&T/Media Release

OKMULGEE, Okla. — Enrollment is open for the 2015 Muscogee (Creek) Nation Summer Youth Program offered through the MCN Department of Education and Training.

Applications will be accepted Jan. 2 - March 31 from youth ages 16-21 who are citizens of a federally recognized tribe and reside within the MCN jurisdiction. Income guidelines apply to all tribes except MCN.

Applications are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/MCNSummerYouth2015>.

Contact MCN E&T at: 1-800-482-1979, 918-732-7777 or: youthworks@mcn-nsn.gov.

Employment and Training hosts clothing drive

E&T/Media Release

OKMULGEE, Okla. — Donations for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Employment and Training Clothing Drive are due by March 31.

Our newest program is to assist Muscogee (Creek) citizens who are in need of business and industrial attire and are seeking/attending job interviews or are recently hired. This program is part of supportive services that provide immediate assistance to individuals who are called for a job interview and may not have the proper clothing to wear or have recently been hired for employment that requires a certain dress code, including safety shoes or steel toe boots.

Bring your new or gently used clothing to the MCN ET office at U.S. Highway 75 and Oklahoma Loop 56 in Okmulgee. You may also contact our office at: 918-732-7780 or jmcbee@mcn-nsn.gov.

Donation boxes have also been placed at local businesses in the Okmulgee area. Please call to have a box placed at your location.

MCN to host 2015 Trading at the River Conference and Native Marketplace

ONABEN/Media Release

PORTLAND, Ore. — ONABEN (Our Native American Business Network) announces the city for the annual Trading at the River Conference and Native Marketplace.

The conference, held for the last 11 years in Oregon and Washington, will be held May 2015 in Tulsa, Okla.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation will host the conference and Native marketplace at their properties, River Spirit Casino and RiverWalk.

Trading at the River is a two-day event that focuses on content to facilitate growing strong economies in Indian Country.

Veronica Hix, ONABEN Executive Director, expressed her appreciation at the opportunity to bring Trading at the River to Oklahoma.

“Trading at the River is a unique experience for entrepreneurs, small business owners and economic development practitioners to gather, exchange and grow. The change in venue next year will be a great opportunity to be able to share Trading at the River outside of the Pacific Northwest.”

ONABEN Board Chairman, Jack Lenox, also commented that, “The Muscogee (Creek) Nation offered to host our event and, in line with ONABEN’s growth and expanded services across Indian country, the ONABEN Board of Directors approved the city and venue change.”

ONABEN will also partner with the Cherokee Nation Tribal Employment Rights Office and Mvskoke Loan Fund to present Trading at the River. Anchoring the conference is a marketplace where Native artists, crafters and other vendors can showcase and sell their products and services.

For more information contact Selena Yokoyama at: 503-968-1500.

Minors eligible for photos on new IDs

MCN Citizenship/Media Release

Effective immediately, children ages 12 and older are able to have their photo placed on their Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship ID. A parent or legal guardian must be present and must present the proper identification and/or documentation.

If you have any questions please contact the Citizenship Office at 918-732-7941. Also, if you know anyone who has not updated to the new Citizenship ID card please send them our way!



Urqhart to shoot at national competition



Shutterstock

Teen places first at district tournament

Jessica McBride/Editorial Assistant

OKMULGEE, Okla. — Muscogee (Creek) citizen Ashten Urqhart qualified for the 4-H Shooting Sports National Championships after placing fourth at the Oklahoma state level air rifle tournament Jan. 31 in Kingfisher, Okla.

Ashten, 16, has a few months to practice until the national competition June 21-26 in Grand Island, Neb.

To qualify for the state competition, Ashten placed first at the district Dec. 13 in Koweta, Okla.

In order to qualify for nationals, Ashten was required to receive one of the top four scores in the state competition. Each shooter is only eligible to attend the national competition once in their 4-H career.

Ashten has been a part of the Eufaula 4-H air rifle team for the past four years and attended the state competition each year.

“I’ve always liked shooting. I’ve gone hunting since as long as I can remember and I saw this as an opportunity to improve my shooting skills,” Ashten said.

The competition consists of shooting standard and silhouette targets in the prone, kneeling and standing positions.

“Most people like prone

because it’s laying down and easier for them, but I like to shoot standing up,” Ashten said.

This year, Ashten practiced shooting silhouettes to improve her skills. She attributes her success in shooting to imagining she is hunting instead of aiming at a piece of paper.

Charlie, her father and coach, has tried to reinforce this technique by coaching Ashten to take her time with her shots.

“He’s a really great coach,” Ashten said.

“He’s always really encouraging and he’s always got my back.”

She said that having her dad as a coach has reduced her nervousness at competitions.

Charlie said that being a father-daughter team has brought them closer.

He said that being a part of the air rifle team was something that Ashten wanted to do and Charlie is happy to be a part of it.

“I haven’t had to do much encouragement. She’s all about it herself and I just try to back her up when she wants to do something,” Charlie said.

Being a part of the 4-H Club has taught Ashten leadership skills that she said will help her into her adult life.

She has also learned to step outside of her comfort zone.

“Always be open to new experiences and new opportunities to learn,” Ashten said.

She plans to continue being a part of the Eufaula 4-H Club Air Rifle Team for the remainder of her high school career.

Solution to the March 1 word search

